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SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.

OCTOBER TERM, 1940.

No. 573

HYMAN G. STEIN, Petitioner,

vs.

ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, Debtor, HENRY W. KIEL, Trustee for ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, et al.

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

To the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit,

and

BRIEF IN SUPPORT THEREOF.

HYMAN G. STEIN,
722 Chestnut Street,
St. Louis, Missouri,
Petitioner, Pro Se.

ST. LOUIS LAW PRINTING CO., 415 North Eighth Street. CE ntral 4477.

INDEX.

Page

Petition for writ of certiorari 1-19

Questions presented 2

Summary statement of matter involved 4

Reasons relied on for allowance of writ 14

Prayer for writ 19

Supporting brief 21-33

Opinions of the courts below 21

Jurisdiction of this Court 21

Date of final judgment below 22

Statement 22

Specifications of error 22

Argument 25

Point I (Assignment of Errors A, B, C, D, E, F and G) 25

Point II (Assignment of Error H) 29

Point III (Assignment of Error I) 32

Conclusion 33

Cases Cited.

Curtis et al. v. Metropolitan Street Railway Company, 125 Mo. App. 369, 372, 374, 102 S. W. 62, 63 (Kansas City Court of Appeals) 17, 33

Danciger et al. etc. v. Cooley, 248 U. S. 319, 327 ..... 15, 26

Dickinson Industrial Site, Inc., v. Cowan, 309 U. S. 382 22

Downtown Inv. Ass'n v. Boston Metropolitan Bldg., Inc., 81 F. (2) 314, 329 (C. C. A. 1 C.) 17, 29

Duvall v. Craig et al., 2 Wheat. 45, 58-59 ..... 14, 27

Edwards v. Bay State Gas Co., 172 F. 971 31

Erie Railroad Company v. Tompkins, 302 U. S. 671 ... 22

Exley et al. v. H. W. Clark Co., 79 F. (2) 681, 684 (C. C. A. 7 C.) 17, 29

Gavinzel v. Crump, 89 U. S. 308, 319 15

Harrison v. Fortlage, 161 U. S. 57, 63 ..... 15, 16, 28, 30

Ivanhoe Building & Loan Association of Newark v. Orr, 295 U. S. 243 22

Kihlberg v. United States, 97 U. S. 398, 402 ..... 14, 15

Kokusai Kisen Kabushiki Kaisha v. Columbia Stevedoring Co., Inc., 100 F. (2) 1016, affirming decision of District Court, 23 Fed. Supp. 403, 405 ..... 15, 26

Kraemmerer v. St. Louis E. T. Ry. Co., 201 Mo. App. 305, 315, 211 S. W. 687, 689 (St. Louis Court of Appeals) 17, 33

Mylton et al. v. New York, C. & St. L. R. Co., 198 S. W. 189 (Kansas City Court of Appeals; not officially reported) 17, 33

New York Rapid Transit Co. v. New York, 303 U. S. 573, 592 ..... 14, 27

Railroad Companies v. Schutte, 103 U. S. 118, 140 ..... 14, 27

Robbins v. Rollins' Executors, 127 U. S. 622, 633 15

Sheets v. Selden, 74 U. S. 416, 424 ..... 15, 28

The Anasoldo San Georgio I. v. Rheinstrom Brothers, 294 U. S. 494 22

The Harriman, 76 U. S. 161, 173 15

Turner v. Woodward, 259 F. 737, 750 (approving and following decision in Edwards v. Bay State Gas Co., 172 F. 971, 978, 981) 16, 31

Wallace v. Fiske, 80 F. (2) 897, 907-909 25

Warner v. New Orleans, 167 U. S. 467 22

Weiffenbach v. McLean et al., 79 F. (2) 63, 68 (C. C. A. 9 C.) 17, 29

Statutes Cited.

Bankruptcy Act, Sec. 24 (c), as amended by the Act of June 22, 1938, 52 Stat. 854-855, 11 U. S. C. A. 47 (c) 21

Bankruptcy Act, Sec. 77-B, 11 U. S. C. A., Sec. 207 (f, 5) 18

Chandler Act, 11 U. S. C. A., Sec. 621 (4), Sec. 636, Subchapter XIII 18, 31, 32

Judicial Code, Sec. 240 (a), as amended by Act of Feb. 13, 1925, 43 Stat. 938 (28 U. S. C. A., Sec. 347)..... 21

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PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

To the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

To the Honorable Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States:

Now comes Hyman G. Stein, petitioner, and respectfully petitions this Honorable Court to grant a Writ of Certiorari to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, and to remove therefrom to this Court, for review, the record in the case lately pending in said Circuit Court of Appeals styled "In the Matter of St. Louis Public Service Company, Debtor. Hyman G. Stein, Appellant, vs. St. Louis Public Service Company, Debtor; Henry W. Kiel, Trustee for St. Louis Public Service Company, et al., Appellees," being Cause No. 11,669 in bankruptcy, on the docket of said Circuit Court of Appeals.

The duly certified record, including all of the proceedings here material, had in the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Missouri, where said cause was heard, and in the said Circuit Court of Appeals, to which an appeal was taken by petitioner from the judgment of the trial court, is filed herewith under separate cover.

Your petitioner represents that he is aggrieved by the decision and judgment of said Circuit Court of Appeals in said cause wherein said Circuit Court of Appeals on July 24, 1940, affirmed the judgment of the trial court, and on August 17, 1940, thereafter denied this petitioner's petition for a rehearing of said cause.

Your petitioner states that the matters of issue in said cause are of peculiar gravity and great general importance, in that the following are the questions presented:

QUESTIONS PRESENTED.

1. Where, in a bankruptcy proceeding for the reorganization of a street railroad corporation, the Reorganization Plan provides, and the tort creditors receive from the District Court a notice that, under the terms of the Plan, holders of tort claims will receive in cash 35 per cent of the amount of their claims, together with their court costs, and that,

> "in addition thereto, and as a further payment on account of such claims the Reorganized Company shall pay in cash the reasonable compensation and expenses of The (tort creditors') Committee * * *, and its counsel, for their services in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings, the amount of such compensation and expenses to be determined by the Court, * * *"

and such proceedings are had that the Plan, with such provision therein, is duly accepted by the tort creditors

and confirmed by the Court — May the Court thereafter make such an order as in effect disallows the payment to the tort creditors of 35 per cent of the amount of their claims, net to themselves, and leaves the tort creditors personally liable for the services performed by such counsel on their behalf in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings?

2. Where such provision was incorporated in the Plan, in pursuance of the reorganization committee's agreement with the tort creditors' committee that the tort creditors should receive 35 per cent of their claims in cash, net to themselves, and the District Court, using the aforesaid language contained in the Plan, notifies each tort creditor in writing of said provision and further states in such written notice that the Court has found the Plan to be fair, equitable and feasible, and that

> "Under the Plan you are entitled to receive thirty-five per cent of your claim in cash,"

and such proceedings are had that the Plan is duly accepted by the tort creditors and confirmed by the Court — May the Court thereafter refuse to allow compensation to the tort creditors' counsel for his services on their behalf in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings and restrict his compensation by relating it solely to the benefit of his services to the debtor's estate?

3. Where a Reorganization Plan, as accepted by the parties and confirmed by the Court, provides that holders of tort claims shall receive a specified cash payment, and that, in addition thereto,

> "and as a further payment on account of such claims"

the Reorganized Company shall pay in cash the reasonable compensation and expenses of the tort creditors' commit-

tee and its counsel for their services in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings—May the Court consider and treat the compensation of said counsel for such services as a reorganization expense, thereby restricting his compensation by relating it solely to the benefit of his services to the estate and leaving the tort creditors liable for the services which were rendered by him in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings, on their behalf and to their benefit?

4. Did the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, in interpreting the rights of the tort creditors and their counsel under a Plan filed, accepted and approved in Missouri, decide a question of local and contract law in a way conflicting with applicable decisions of the Courts of Missouri, which hold, in effect, that where a claimant is paid a sum of money in settlement of his claim and the party so paying it agrees, in addition, and as a part payment on account of the claim, to pay the claimant's attorney's fees, the amount of settlement is not the amount of money actually paid the claimant, but the settlement must be taken as an agreement on the part of the party so paying the money to pay the claimant's attorney such amount of compensation as he might properly have charged his client?

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF MATTER INVOLVED.*

On June 15, 1934, by the filing of its voluntary petition (R. 1-8), St. Louis Public Service Company, a utility corporation, engaged in the business of furnishing transportation facilities in and about the City of St. Louis, Missouri, and hereinafter sometimes called "Debtor," instituted in

*This petitioner's hereinafter mentioned application, at the hearing in the District Court thereon, was taken as evidence of the facts therein recited (R. 151-153, 163), and, therefore, this summary statement includes as facts many of such recitals.

the United States District Court for the Eastern Division of the Eastern District of Missouri a proceeding for reorganization under the provisions of Section 77-B of the Bankruptcy Act, and thereafter such proceedings were had in said cause (R. 9-43); that on July 7, 1939, said District Court therein confirmed a Plan for the reorganization of said Debtor (R. 43-54). After write-offs and the making of all payments provided in the Plan, the Debtor had assets of $47,554,329.00, including $4,450,000.00 in cash, and a net worth of $20,362,000.00 (R. 29, 159-160).

On about July 16, 1934, at the instance and request of law firms representing a large amount of tort claims, there was formed a protective committee, which, while denominated "The Committee For The Protection Of General Creditors Of St. Louis Public Service Company," represented only tort creditors (R. 58-59). The said Committee, sometimes referred to, and named in said Plan, as "The General Creditors' Committee" (R. 25), and herein usually referred to as "Committee," was constituted under and by virtue of a written agreement, dated as of July 16, 1934 (R. 185-188), and filed in said proceeding on December 27, 1934 (R. 58), and by the terms of said agreement the creditors who joined therein expressly authorized the Committee to employ counsel (R. 187) and in substance agreed, among other things, that the Committee should have full authority to represent and act for them (R. 186-187), and that all expenses incurred by the Committee should be assessed against and paid by them, and that, as security for the payment of such expenses, the Committee should have a first lien on their claims (R. 187).

On October 19, 1938, the District Court entered an order finding, in substance, among other things, that it was to the best interests of the tort creditors that the Committee should, and directing that it be, authorized to continue in its work on behalf of the tort creditors (R. 10-12).

There was a total of about 7,600 tort claims (R. 58-59) in the aggregate principal amount of $2,228,699.00 (R. 51) allowed in said proceeding and the Committee was duly authorized to act for the holders of the great majority of said aggregate amount of tort claims (R. 58-59).

At about the time it was constituted the Committee employed Petitioner, an attorney of St. Louis, Missouri, as counsel, and Petitioner served the Committee and the tort creditors as counsel in and in connection with the reorganization proceedings from the time of his employment on about July 16, 1934, until after the confirmation of the Plan, for an aggregate of about five years and four months, during which time, as such counsel, he performed services on approximately 800 days on an average of four hours per day (R. 59-60).

In the course and as a part of his services as such counsel, Petitioner, among other things, instituted and prosecuted in said reorganization proceedings various actions wherein he contended for priority for tort claims and challenged the validity of the claims of a certain group of banks and the validity and priority of certain mortgages and liens on debtor's property (R. 60-63). The Plan, as was found by the District Court in its order of confirmance, involved a compromise of such litigation and the Court found such compromise "fair and equitable" (R. 52, 60-61).

While the tort creditors, as a result of Petitioner's efforts in their behalf, received about $600,000.00 more than they would have received under plans of reorganization formulated during the early stages of the proceedings (R. 62-65), the Petitioner's services redounded also to the great financial benefit of the debtor itself, particularly in the compromise of the mentioned claims of a group of banks which arose out of a loan from the banks to the debtor in the principal amount of $10,000,000.00 and the

debtor's pledge of $16,626,000.00, principal amount of the mortgage bonds of its predecessor in title as collateral security therefor (R. 60-62). Said banks having filed in said proceeding their respective claims (R. 76-81), and the debtor's trustee having filed his report recommending that said claims and said pledge of bonds as collateral security therefor should be adjudged valid (R. 81-82), the Petitioner instituted and prosecuted class proceedings challenging the validity of said claims and pledge and objecting to the allowance thereof (R. 82-89). Such litigation (wherein Petitioner also served as counsel for the City of St. Louis) (R. 88) was compromised by, and under the express terms of the Plan (R. 23-24, 52), upon a basis whereby the banks made concessions (R. 23-24) which, as appears from the debtor's evidence and recitals in the Plan, resulted in a saving to the debtor of about $2,222,-144.01 (R. 156-158, 23-24, 89-93).* The District Court, in confirming the Plan, found that said compromise "is fair and equitable" (R. 52).

During 1937 and 1938, while all of the before-mentioned litigation instituted by Petitioner was pending, the Committee and Petitioner conducted negotiations with the Reorganization Committee's counsel to the end of settling all such litigation and reaching an agreement in respect of the treatment to be accorded holders of tort claims in the reorganization of the debtor (R. 113-117). After various proposals and counter proposals had been made, the Reorganization Committee proposed that the Reorganization Plan should provide for the payment to tort creditors of 35 per cent of the principal amount of their claims (R.

*While the Special Master to whom such matter had been referred filed on July 7, 1939, his Report recommending that said objections be overruled and that the claims and pledge be adjudged valid, the litigation, at the time of such Report, had become moot by reason of the matter having already been settled by the terms of the Plan, and, accordingly, exceptions or further proceedings in respect of such Report had been made unnecessary.

115-116). Petitioner and the Committee rejected such offer and "made clear that (they) would not accept a Plan providing for 35 per cent cash payment to tort creditors," unless such payment should be net to the tort creditors themselves (R. 170), and finally the said negotiators reached an agreement (R. 115-117), in pursuance of which there was incorporated in the Plan, Section II (2d) thereof (R. 25-26), providing as follows:

> "Holders of tort claims will receive a sum in cash equal to 35 per cent of the principal amount of their respective claims (without interest) and in addition thereto, and as a further payment on account of such claims the Reorganized Company shall pay in cash the reasonable compensation and expenses of The General Creditors' Committee formed under agreement dated as of July 16, 1934, and its counsel, for their services in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings, the amount of such compensation and expenses to be determined by the Court; said sums in cash to be paid as promptly as reasonably possible after the confirmation of the Plan of Reorganization, and exclusive of court costs which will be paid in full by the Reorganized Company; said sums to be so paid on account of said tort claims shall be in full settlement of the respective claims of tort claimants against the Company and its property."

In the respective treatment of all the classes of creditors and stockholders dealt with by the reorganization Plan, the tort creditors constitute the sole and only class for which the Plan contained an express provision that, as a part and "further payment" on account of their claims, the reorganized Debtor "shall pay" the compensation and expenses of its Committee and counsel for their services in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings. No same or similar provision is contained in the treatment provided in the Plan for any other class whatsoever (R.

21-24, 26-27). For those other than the Committee and counsel for the tort creditors, there was made a general provision, contained in Section II (7) of the Plan, to the effect that the reorganized Debtor shall pay all costs and expenses of administration and "other allowances" which "may" be approved or made by the Court (R. 28-29). On April 20, 1939, the Plan, containing the aforesaid provision for the tort creditors, was filed in the reorganization proceeding by the Reorganization Committee (R. 13-31).

On May 16, 1939, the District Court entered an order (R. 31) finding and decreeing, among other things, that "said plan is fair and equitable and feasible, and complies with the relevant provisions of all applicable laws" (R. 32), and directing, in substance, that a copy of the Plan and of said Order be sent to all creditors and stockholders, **except the holders of tort claims** (R. 40), and expressly finding that it was unnecessary to send the tort creditors a copy of the plan and of said order for the reason that "in said Plan said tort creditors receive solely cash on account of their claims" (R. 41), and directing the Debtor's Trustee to send to all tort creditors a notice (R. 41), appended to said order as Exhibit E thereto, in the following form (R. 42-43):

[fol. 95] "Exhibit 'E' to Order

Notice to Tort Creditors of the St. Louis Public Service Company

In the District Court of the United States Within and for the Eastern Division of the Eastern Judicial District of Missouri

No. 7651

In the Matter of St. Louis Public Service Company, Debtor

In Proceedings for the Reorganization of a Street Railroad Company

The United States District Court at St. Louis, Missouri, entered an order on May 16, 1939, by which order it found that the Plan of Reorganization proposed on that day by the Reorganization Committee was fair, equitable and feasible. The Court set June 28, 1939 as the date for hearing on confirmation of said Plan. The Plan cannot be confirmed until accepted by two-thirds of each class of creditors, so it is important that you give this matter your prompt attention.

Under the Plan you are entitled to receive thirty-five per cent of your claim in cash. The Plan provides with respect to your claim as follows:

[fol. 96] "(d). Tort Claimants.

Holders of tort claims will receive a sum in cash equal to 35% of the principal amount of their respective claims (without interest) and in addition thereto, and as a further payment on account of such claims the Reorganized Company shall pay in cash the reasonable compensation and expenses of The General Creditors' Committee formed under agreement dated as of July 16, 1934, and its counsel, for their services in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings, the amount of such compensation and expenses to be determined by the Court; said sums in cash to be

paid as promptly as reasonably possible after the confirmation of the Plan of Reorganization, and exclusive of court costs which will be paid in full by the Reorganized Company; said sums to be so paid on account of said tort claims shall be in full settlement of the respective claims of tort claimants against the Company and its property. * * *"

If you have already authorized the said General Creditors' Committee to represent you in this matter, no further action need be taken by you.

If you have not given such authorization and the Plan is acceptable to you, you should give such authorization to the Committee immediately addressed to Committee for the Protection of General Creditors of St. Louis Public Service Company, Room 814—722 Chestnut Street, St. Louis, Missouri, or sign the enclosed form of acceptance and mail the same in accordance with the instructions thereon. All parties will be benefited by a speedy consummation of the reorganization proceedings, and if the [fol. 97] Plan is agreeable to you, kindly cooperate by sending your acceptance at once.

By order of the Court.

Henry W. Kiel, Trustee.

May —, 1939."

In pursuance of such order said notice was sent by Debtor's Trustee to each of the tort creditors (R. 47).

The Plan was accepted on behalf of all classes of creditors and stockholders affected thereby, and thereafter such proceedings were had that, on July 7, 1939, the Court duly entered its order confirming the Plan and directing the doing of such things and taking of such steps "as may be necessary to consummate the Plan and carry it into effect" (R. 43-54).

On December 5, 1939, Petitioner duly filed in said proceeding his Application for the determination by the Court of the amount of his compensation and expenses for "serv-

ices in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings" and for an order directing the payment thereof, in accordance with the provisions of Section II (2d) of the Plan (R. 57-146).

At the hearing had in said District Court on said application this petitioner's application was taken as evidence of the facts therein recited (R. 151-153, 163). It was uncontradicted that Petitioner performed the services mentioned in said application, and that his services were reasonably worth $75,000, the amount prayed for by him therein (R. 163-181). Counsel for the Debtor and its Trustee stated to the Court, at the hearing, that Petitioner had worked hard and had "co-operated throughout this entire proceeding with the Trustee and his Counsel in the administration of the property" (R. 173), but it was contended, in opposition to the amount sought by Petitioner, that his compensable services should be limited to those of his services which were "in connection with the consummation of the Plan and beneficial to the estate as a whole," and that such of Petitioner's services as were "essentially performed for the benefit of the Tort Creditors" were not compensable out of Debtor's estate (R. 166-168, 179-181). The District Court sustained such contention, and, by its order, judgment and decision made and entered in said proceeding on December 21, 1939 (R. 183-184), allowed Petitioner nothing for his services on behalf of the Tort Creditors, "in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings," or his collection for them of about $600,000.00 more than was allotted to them under original Plans as aforesaid, and allowed Petitioner $15,000.00 (plus $778.23 for expenses) for "compensable" services "in connection with the formulation and consummation of the Plan for Reorganization of Debtor and with the administration of its estate" (R. 183-184). In determining Petitioner's said Application, the District Court took into consideration

each individual allowance made to others, and treated Petitioner's compensation and expenses as a reorganization expense, rather than as an additional and "further payment on account of such (tort) claims" (R. 184).

Upon his petition therefor (R. 188), Petitioner was by the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit on January 19, 1940, duly allowed an appeal (R. 196-197) from said order and judgment, which appeal was duly prosecuted by Petitioner to and in said Circuit Court of Appeals (R. 184-185, 188-228).

On July 24, 1940, after due submission (R. 199), the United States Circuit Court of Appeals rendered its opinion (R. 201-214) and judgment (R. 214) upon petitioner's said appeal, affirming the said judgment, order and decision of the said District Court. In its said opinion, so affirming said order, judgment and decision of said District Court, the said Circuit Court of Appeals held (R. 213-214):

> "His (petitioner's) principal services were rendered on behalf of the tort creditors who through his efforts received a substantially larger share of the estate than original plans of reorganization allotted to them.
>
> "If the Trial Court was justified in restricting Mr. Stein's allowance by relating it to the benefit of his services to the estate, the order should be sustained, but Mr. Stein contends that the special provision of the Reorganization Plan, Section II (2d), entitled him to have the full amount of a reasonable contingent fee allowed him. The provision is appended and we think the wording, like that of Section 7 heretofore discussed, is compatible with an intent to cover compensable services only and to leave the amount thereof to the sound discretion of the trial court. Mr. Stein's efforts were primarily for his clients and the amount

allowed him was not disproportionate to the benefit to the estate."

Thereafter, on August 6, 1940, petitioner duly filed his petition for a rehearing (R. 215-224) in said cause in said Circuit Court of Appeals, and said petition for rehearing was denied on August 17, 1940 (R. 225).

REASONS RELIED ON FOR ALLOWANCE OF WRIT.

I.

The decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit to the effect that the language, "services in, and in connection with the Reorganization Proceedings," as used in Section II (2d) of the Plan, must be taken to mean, and be limited to, only such services as were beneficial to the debtor's estate—

(a) fails to give to said language in Section II (2d) of the Plan its usual and ordinary meaning and, in such respect, is in conflict with the decisions of this Court in:

Railroad Companies v. Schutte, 103 U. S. 118, 140, and
New York Rapid Transit Co. v. New York, 303 U. S. 573, 592.

(b) creates, by implication, a restriction which the language does not justify nor necessarily import, and, in such respect, is in conflict with the decisions of this Court in:

Duvall v. Craig et al., 2 Wheat. 45, 58-59; and
Kihlberg v. United States, 97 U. S. 398, 402.

(c) inserts words of which the Parties did not make use in formulating and accepting the Plan, and words of

which the District Court did not make use in its written notice to the tort creditors, as to what they would be entitled to receive under the Plan upon their acceptance and the confirmation thereof, and, in such respects, is in conflict with the decision of this Court in:

Harrison v. Fortlage, 161 U. S. 57, 63.

(d) interpolates a restriction and stipulation not contained nor implied on the face of Section II (2d) of the Plan, nor in the District Court's said written notice to the tort creditors, and, in such respect, is in conflict with the decisions of this Court in:

Robbins v. Rollins' Executors, 127 U. S. 622, 633;
Sheets v. Selden, 74 U. S. 416, 424;
Gavinzel v. Crump, 89 U. S. 308, 319;
Kihlberg v. United States, 97 U. S. 398, 402;
The Harriman, 76 U. S. 161, 173.

(e) gives to the phrase "in, and in connection with" a highly restricted and limited interpretation, rather than a broad interpretation, and, in such respect, is in conflict with the decision of this Court in Danciger et al. etc. v. Cooley, 248 U. S. 319, 327, and with the memorandum decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in:

Kokusai Kisen Kabushiki Kaisha v. Columbia Stevedoring Co., Inc., 100 F. (2) 1016, affirming the decision of the District Court, 23 Fed. Supp. 403, 405.

II.

The decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, to the effect that Section II, (2d), of the Plan is not to be construed as intending to reimburse the

services of counsel for the tort creditors in such sums as he might properly have charged them for his "services in, and in connection with the Reorganization Proceedings," so that each tort creditor will be able to receive 35 per cent of the principal amount of his claim, net, and without charges or rebates for such services, is in conflict with the decision of this Court in Harrison v. Fortlage, 161 U. S. 57, 63; and with the decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in,

> Turner v. Woodward, 259 F. 737, 750 (approving and following the decision in Edwards v. Bay State Gas Co., 172 F. 971, 978, 981).

III.

The decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit to the effect that Section II, (2d), of the Plan (negotiated, agreed upon, accepted, and approved in Missouri) does not provide for the payment to the tort creditors of 35 per cent of their claims, net to themselves, and that petitioner is not entitled to an allowance out of the Reorganized Debtor's estate for the full amount of reasonable compensation for his services on behalf of the tort creditors, "in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings," decides a question of local and contract law in a way conflicting with applicable decisions of the Courts of Missouri which hold in effect that, where a claimant is paid a sum of money in settlement of his claim and the party so paying it agrees, in addition, to pay the claimant's attorney's fees, the amount of settlement is not the amount of money actually paid the claimant, but the settlement must be taken as an agreement on the part of the party so paying the money to pay the claimant's attorney the full amount of compensation which he would be entitled to receive from the claimant under

the terms of his employment; among which applicable decisions of the Courts of Missouri are,

Curtis et al. v. Metropolitan Street Railway Company, 125 Mo. App. 369, 372, 374, 102 S. W. 62, 63 (Kansas City Court of Appeals);

Kraemmerer v. St. Louis E. T. Ry. Co., 201 Mo. App. 305, 315, 211 S. W. 687, 689 (St. Louis Court of Appeals);

Mylton et al. v. New York, C. & St. L. R. Co., 198 S. W. 189 (Kansas City Court of Appeals; not officially reported).

IV.

There being nothing in the Plan as accepted by the tort creditors which indicated to them that they would be left liable for the services performed by their counsel on their behalf in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings, or that their counsel's compensable services would be restricted to only such of his services as were beneficial to the debtor, the decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, to the effect that the District Court might so limit the compensable services of the tort creditors' counsel after their acceptance of the Plan and thereby modify and cancel rights accorded the tort creditors under the usual and ordinary meaning of the provision made in the Plan for them, without submitting the Plan as so changed for further consideration of the tort creditors, is in conflict with the decisions of the Circuit Courts of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, the First Circuit, and the Seventh Circuit, respectively, in,

Downtown Inv. Ass'n v. Boston Metropolitan Bldg., Inc., 81 F. (2) 314, 329 (C. C. A. 1 C.);

Exley et al. v. H. W. Clark Co., 79 F. (2d) 681, 684 (last sentence) (C. C. A. 7 C.);

Weiffenbach v. McLean et al., 79 F. (2) 63, 68 (C. C. A. 9 C.).

V.

While said proceeding was under Section 77-B of the Bankruptcy Act, the language employed in providing that the debtor as a part payment on account of the tort claims shall pay the compensation of tort creditors' counsel, is practically the same language as is employed in that part of the Chandler Act [11 U. S. C. A., Sec. 621 (4)] which, separate and apart from the sub-chapter thereof (11 U. S. C. A., Sec. 636, Sub-chapter XIII) relating to compensation and allowances, provides that, as a prerequisite to the confirmation of a plan, the judge shall be satisfied that,

> "(4) all payments made or promised by the debtor * * *, for services * * * **in, or in connection with the proceeding** * * *, have been fully disclosed to the judge and are reasonable, or, if to be fixed after confirmation of the plan, will be subject to the approval of the judge. * * *" (Emphasis Petitioner's.)*

The Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit has, therefore, in effect decided that the phrase "services * * * in, or in connection with the proceeding" as so used in the Chandler Act [Sec. 621 (4), U. S. C. A.] means and is limited to only such services as, independent of any contract or provision in the Plan, are compensable under other portions of the Bankruptcy Act relating to compensation and allowances. Such question so decided by said Circuit Court of Appeals is an important question of federal law which has not been, but should be, settled by this Court.

VI.

It is a special and important matter that the public confidence in the Courts and the administration of justice

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*A somewhat similar provision in Section 77-B of the Bankruptcy Act (11 U. S. C. A. § 207 [f, 5]) reads as follows:

> "After hearing such objections as may be made to the plan, the judge shall confirm the plan if satisfied that * * * (5) all amounts to be paid by the debtor * * *, and all amounts to be paid to committees or reorganization managers, * * * for services or expenses incident to the reorganization have been fully disclosed and are reasonable, or are to be subject to the approval of the judge."

should be protected by forbidding that some thousands of tort creditors, who have accepted a plan of reorganization in reliance upon the treatment of their claims as stated in a notice of the plan of reorganization sent them by a District Court, should be deprived of, and left personally liable for, the expense of their counsel fees which, by the ordinary and common meaning of the language employed by said District Court in such notice, they were advised the debtor would pay as an additional and "further payment on account of such (tort creditors') claims," and of which they were deprived by reading into such notice limitations and restrictions not contained therein.

PRAYER.

For the purpose of correcting the errors complained of and to the end that the rights of the petitioner may be determined in accordance with the law, your petitioner respectfully prays that a writ of certiorari be issued under the seal of this Court, directed to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, commanding it to certify and send to this Court on a day certain, to be therein designated, a full and complete transcript of the records and proceedings of the said Circuit Court of Appeals in the within described cause of "In the Matter of St. Louis Public Service Company, Debtor. Hyman G. Stein, Appellant, vs. St. Louis Public Service Company, Debtor; Henry W. Kiel, Trustee for St. Louis Public Service Company, et al., Appellees, Cause No. 11,669, in Bankruptcy," to the end that the judgment of said Circuit Court of Appeals in said cause may be reviewed by this Court as provided by law, and that your petitioner may have such other relief as to this Court may seem appropriate, and that the judgment of the said Circuit Court of Appeals may be reviewed by this Honorable Court.

HYMAN G. STEIN,
Petitioner, Pro Se.

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.

OCTOBER TERM, 1940.

No. .....

HYMAN G. STEIN, Petitioner,

vs.

ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, Debtor, HENRY W. KIEL, Trustee for ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, et al.

SUPPORTING BRIEF.

I.

OPINIONS OF THE COURTS BELOW.

The opinion and decree of the said District Court appears at pages 183-184, inclusive, of the transcript of the record filed herewith, and it is not reported.

The opinion of the said Circuit Court of Appeals (R. 200) is reported in 114 F. (2d) 53.

II.

JURISDICTION OF THIS COURT.

1.

Jurisdiction of this Court is invoked under Section 240 (a) of the Judicial Code, as amended by the Act of February 13, 1925, 43 Stat. 938 (28 U. S. C. A., Sec. 347), and Section 24 (c) of the Bankruptcy Act, as amended by the Act of June 22, 1938, 52 Stat. 854-855 [11 U. S. C. A. 47 (c)].

2.

The following decisions sustain the jurisdiction of this Court to review the decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the reasons set out in the specifications of error:

Dickinson Industrial Site, Inc., v. Cowan, 309 U. S. 382;
Warner v. New Orleans, 167 U. S. 467;
The Anasoldo San Georgio I. v. Rheinstrom Brothers, 294 U. S. 494;
Ivanhoe Building & Loan Association of Newark v. Orr, 295 U. S. 243;
Erie Railroad Company v. Tompkins, 302 U. S. 671.

III.

DATE OF FINAL JUDGMENT BELOW.

The original date of the judgment of said Circuit Court of Appeals, here sought to be reviewed, is July 24, 1940 (R. 214). Petitioner's petition for rehearing was duly filed in said Circuit Court of Appeals on August 6, 1940 (R. 215-224), and was overruled on August 17, 1940 (R. 225).

IV.

STATEMENT.

A full statement of the case has been made in the petition for writ of certiorari, and in the interest of brevity the statement is not here repeated.

V.

SPECIFICATIONS OF ERROR.

A.

The Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit erred in deciding and adjudging that the District Court was justified in restricting petitioner's allowance of com-

pensation by relating it to the benefit of his services to the estate of St. Louis Public Service Company, debtor.

B.

The Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit erred in deciding and adjudging that Section II (2d) of the Plan of Reorganization of St. Louis Public Service Company does not entitle petitioner to have allowed unto him the full amount of the reasonable compensation for his services on behalf of the tort creditors in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings.

C.

The Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit erred in deciding and adjudging that the wording of Section II (2d) of the Plan of Reorganization of St. Louis Public Service Company is compatible with an intent to cover only services which benefited the estate of the debtor, and to leave the amount thereof to the sound discretion of the trial court.

D.

The Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit erred in deciding and adjudging that there was no shifting of liability in the Plan from the tort creditors to the Reorganized Company for the compensation of petitioner for his services on behalf of the tort creditors in and in connection with the reorganization proceedings.

E.

The Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit erred in failing to give to the phrase "services in, and in connection with the reorganization proceedings," as used

in Section II (2d) of the Plan, the usual and ordinary meaning thereof, and in creating by implication a restriction which the said language does not justify nor necessarily import.

F.

The Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit erred in that it, in effect, inserted in Section II (2d) of the Plan, words of which the parties did not make use in formulating and accepting the Plan, and words of which the District Court did not make use in its written notice to the tort creditors as to what they would be entitled to receive under the Plan.

G.

The Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit erred in that it, in effect, interpolated in Section II (2d) of the Plan a restriction and stipulation not implied on the face thereof.

H.

The Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit erred in that it considered and treated the compensation of the tort creditors' counsel for his services in, and in connection with the reorganization proceedings as a reorganization expense, rather than as a part and further payment on account of the tort claims.

I.

The Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit erred in that it decided a question of Missouri contract law in a way conflicting with applicable decisions of the courts of Missouri.

ARGUMENT.

POINT I.

(Assignment of Errors A, B, C, D, E, F and G.)

Holders of a great majority in amount of the tort claims joined in the agreement constituting the tort creditors' committee (R. 58) and by the terms of such agreement expressly authorized the committee's employment of counsel, obligated themselves for the payment of their committee's compensation and expenses and subjected their claims to a first lien as security for the payment of all expenses incurred by the committee in their behalf (R. 186-187).*

The Plan as submitted to and accepted by the tort creditors provides that as a part "and further payment" on account of their claims, the reorganized company shall pay the reasonable compensation and expenses of the tort creditors' committee and its counsel, for their "services in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings." The District Court's notice to the tort creditors not only quoted the language of Section II (2d) of the Plan, but preceded such quotation with the unequivocal statement and explanation to each tort creditor that,

> "Under the Plan you are entitled to receive thirty-five per cent of your claim in cash" (R. 42).

By interpolation, inserting in Section II (2d) of the Plan words neither contained therein nor implied on the face thereof, and giving to said language "for their services in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings" a meaning highly limited, restricted and contrary

*As to the probable liability of the remaining tort creditors for a proportionate part of the expense for services performed on behalf and to the benefit of the class as a whole, see: Wallace v. Fiske, 80 F. (2) 897, 907-909.

to the ordinary and usual meaning thereof, the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit has in effect substituted for such languge in the Plan the phrase **"for such** of their services in and in connection with the reorganization proceedings **as were beneficial to the debtor's estate."** In such manner the tort creditors have been left liable for the compensation of their counsel for his services on their behalf in and in connection with the reorganization proceedings and have been deprived of a material and integral part of the consideration which the Plan provides, and which the District Court notified them that they would receive in settlement of their claims; and in such manner the rights of petitioner have been adversely and materially changed.

That the interpretation by said Circuit Court of Appeals of the language "in connection with" is not in accordance with the ordinary and usual meaning thereof and that such language is not to be given a restricted or limited meaning, and that the decision of said Circuit Court of Appeals is, in such respects, in conflict with an applicable decision of this Court readily appears upon an examination of the decision in Danciger et al., etc., v. Cooley, 248 U. S. 319, 327.

The decision of said Circuit Court of Appeals in giving to the language "in connection with" a highly restricted and limited meaning, rather than a broad meaning, is also in conflict with the decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in Kokusai Kisen Kabushiki Kaisha v. Columbia Stevedoring Co., Inc., 100 F. (2) 1016, approving and affirming, by a memorandum decision, the decision of the District Court (23 Fed. Supp. 403, 405-406) holding:

> "The Courts have given the phrase 'in connection with' a broad interpretation. In the case of Gurney

v. Atlantic & Great Western R. Co., 58 N. Y. 358, * * * the Court held that said claim (for counsel services) should be paid, Judge Allen, in a concurring opinion, stating (pages 371, 372):

"'The words, "in connection with that company's railways," as used and in the relation they bear to the whole clause, are the equivalent of "in the interest and upon the employment of that company in and about its railways and the operation and management thereof, and all matters connected with, relating to, and growing out of the proper and legitimate business of the company as the possessor and operator of such railways."

"'See, also, Danciger v. Cooley, 248 U. S. 319, 39 S. Ct. 119, 63 L. Ed. 266.'"

The decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit in creating, by implication, a restriction which the language "for their services in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings," as used in Section II (2d) of the Plan, neither justifies nor necessarily imports, is in conflict with a number of decision of this Court. In Railroad Companies v. Schutte, 103 U. S. 118, 140, this Court said:

"* * * in * * * contracts, language is to be given, if possible, its usual and ordinary meaning. The object is to find out from the words used what the parties intended to do."

In New York Transit Co. v. New York, 303 U. S. 573, 575, this Court held:

"There is no reason to limit the ordinary meaning of words used in a contract by men prepared to invest under its terms."

In Duvall v. Craig et al., 2 Wheat. 45, 58-59, this Court said:

"The case ought to be a very strong one, which

should authorize a court to create, by implication, a restriction which the order of the language does not necessarily import or justify. It ought to be one in which no judicial doubt could exist of the real intention of the parties to create such a restriction."

In Harrison v. Fortlage, 161 U. S. 57, 63, this Court said:

"The Court is not at liberty, either to disregard words used by the parties, * * *, or to insert words which the parties have not made use of."

In Sheets v. Selden, 74 U. S. 416, 424, this Court held:

"This Court cannot interpolate what the contract does not contain."

There was nothing in Section II (2d) of the Plan as submitted to and accepted by the tort creditors which indicated to them (or to petitioner) that they would be left liable for petitioner's compensation for his services on their behalf in, and in connection with the reorganization proceedings, nor that the compensation payable under the Plan to petitioner by the Reorganized Company would be related solely to the benefit of his services to the debtor's estate. The District Court's notice not only advised each tort creditor of the provisions of Section II (2d) of the Plan, in the language thereof, but further explained as a preface thereto that,

"Under the Plan you are entitled to receive thirty-five per cent of your claim in cash" (R. 42).

The decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit in effect cancels the provision in the Plan, as accepted by the tort creditors, that the compensation of their counsel for his services in, and in connection with the reorganization proceedings shall be paid by the Reorganized Company as a part and further payment on ac-

count of the tort claims, and in such respect is in conflict with applicable decisions of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the First, Seventh and Ninth Circuits, respectively.

In Downtown Inv. Ass'n v. Boston Metropolitan Bldgs., Inc., 81 F. (2) 314, 329 (C. C. A. 1 C.), the Court said:

> "There was nothing in the original plan which indicated to the bondholders that the liens secured by their mortgage were to be subordinated to the rights of the lessees. We think the district court erred in not submitting the plan as amended for further consideration of the creditors and stockholders."

In Exley et al. v. H. W. Clark Co., 79 F. (2) 681, 684 (last sentence) (C. C. A., 7 C.), the Court said:

> "These directors voluntarily offered to relinquish and cancel those bonds in case the plan was approved. That provision is in the approved plan, and under the circumstances the Court had no power to cancel the bonds unconditionally. * * *"

In Weiffenbach v. McLean et al., 79 F. (2) 63, 68 (C. C. A., 9 C.), the Court said:

> "The parties did not authorize the acceptance of the plan which was finally approved by the Court. Consequently the order of the Court was without the necessary authority."

POINT II.

(Assignment of Error H.)

The Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit in effect upheld and approved the action and decision of the District Court in considering and treating petitioner's compensation as a reorganization expense, rather than as a part and further payment on account of the tort claims.

To treat the petitioner's compensation as a reorganization expense and determinable according to the rules applicable to the allowance of compensation and expenses in corporate reorganization proceedings is to nullify that part of Section II (2d) of the Plan which provides that such compensation shall be paid as a part and further payment on account of tort claims. The District Court's order states that in making allowances to petitioner and others "* * * each individual allowance was taken into consideration by the Court in connection with the other allowances. * * *" Such action and decision, in conflict with the decision of this Court in Harrison v. Fortlage, 161 U. S. 57, 63, disregards words "used by the parties."

It is uncontradicted that the tort creditors' representatives rejected a proposal that the tort creditors should be paid only 35 per cent of their claims and "made clear" to the Reorganization Committee that they would not accept a plan unless it provided for the payment to the tort creditors of 35 per cent of their claims in cash net to the tort creditors, and that, in pursuance of an agreement to that effect, there was inserted in the plan the provision respecting the payment by the Reorganized Company of the compensation of the tort creditors committee and its counsel for their services "in, and in connection with the reorganization proceedings" (R. 115-117; 170).

The decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit deprives the petitioner of his right under the terms of the plan to be allowed compensation in such amount as under the ordinary rules between counsel and client he would have been entitled to recover for his "services in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings" and deprives the tort creditors of their right under the plan to receive 35 per cent of their claims in cash, net to themselves and without charges or rebates, and in such respects is in conflict with the decision of the

Circuit Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in Turner v. Woodward et al., 259 F. 737, 750 (last two paragraphs), citing with approval, characterizing as analogous, and relying on, the decision in Edwards v. Bay State Gas Co., 172 F. 971. In said case of Edwards v. Bay State Gas Co. (so approved and relied on by the Circuit Court of Appeals for the First Circuit) there had been entered a consent decree providing, among other things (172 F. 971, 978), that, "the receiver shall further retain in his hands a sum sufficient to cover the disbursements made * * * and other expenses incurred in connection with the suit and proceeding * * * and to cover, also, allowances to counsel * * * for intervening petitioners * * * as may be determined by this Court. * * * The receiver is authorized to pay * * * the bonds presented * * *." In its subsequent decision respecting the rights of counsel for the intervening petitioners under the terms of such consent decree the Court said (172 F. 971, 981):

> "* * * the Court must construe the interlocutory decree * * *, as intending to reimburse the services and disbursements of the counsel for the interveners in such sums as they might properly have charged their clients, so that each client will be able to receive his income bonds in full, net, and without charges or rebates. By force of that decree the court is to award here whatever, under the ordinary rules between counsel and client, counsel would have been entitled to recover for services and disbursements; and this independently of any objection that * * * without the decree * * *, nothing could have been awarded in this proceeding."

The language "services in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings," as used in Section II (2d) of the Plan, is practically the same language as is employed in that part of the Chandler Act [11 U. S. C. A., Sec. 621 (4)] which, separate and apart from the subchapter thereof (11 U. S. C. A., Sec. 636, Subchapter XIII)

relating to compensation and allowances, provides that, as a prerequisite to the confirmation of a plan, the judge shall be satisfied that:

> "(4) All payments made or promised by the debtor * * *, for services * * * **in, or in connection with the proceeding** * * *, have been fully disclosed to the judge and are reasonable, or, if to be fixed after confirmation of the plan, will be subject to the approval of the judge, * * *." (Emphasis petitioner's.)

The Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit has in effect decided that "services in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings" means only such services as, independent of any other consideration, are compensable under the provisions of the Bankruptcy Act relating to **allowances** of compensation and expenses and the effect of such an interpretation is to make nugatory the quoted language of 11 U. S. C. A., Section 621 (4). Such question so decided by said Circuit Court of Appeals is an important question of federal law which has not been, but in view of such decision and the effect thereof, should be, settled by this Court.

POINT III.

(Assignment of Error I.)

The plan was filed, accepted, approved and confirmed in Missouri. It is in effect a contract between the parties affected thereby which has been approved by the Court. As such contract its language and terms should be interpreted in accordance with the applicable decisions of the courts of Missouri. Therefore, petitioner respectfully submits that the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit has decided a question of Missouri contract law in a way conflicting with applicable decisions of Missouri which hold in effect that, where a claimant is paid a sum of money in settlement of his claim and the party so paying it agrees, in addition, to pay the claimant's attorney's

fees, the settlement must be taken as an agreement on the part of the party so paying the money to pay the claimant's attorney the full amount of compensation which he would be entitled to receive from the claimant under the terms of his employment. Among the decisions of Missouri, so conflicted with by the decision of said Circuit Courts of Appeals are,

Curtis et al. v. Metropolitan Street Railway Company, 125 Mo. App. 369, 372, 374, 102 S. W. 62, 63 (Kansas City Court of Appeals);

Kraemmerer v. St. Louis E. T. Ry. Co., 201 Mo. App. 305, 315, 211 S. W. 687, 689 (St. Louis Court of Appeals);

Mylton et al. v. New York C. & St. L. R. Co., 198 S. W. 189 (Kansas City Court of Appeals, not officially reported).

While such Missouri decisions involve cases in which settlement was made without the knowledge of the claimant's attorney, such fact appears to have been treated in said decisions as but incidental, and the nature and terms of the settlement agreement are the decisive factors upon which the decisions are founded and the mentioned rule of law declared.

Conclusion.

Being desirous of not burdening the Court with an unduly lengthy argument, we have briefly called to the Court's attention the questions involved and the reasons that exist for the issuance of the writ of certiorari.

It is respectfully submitted that this case is one calling for the exercise by this Court of its supervisory powers by granting a writ of certiorari, and thereafter reviewing and reversing the decision below.

Respectfully submitted,

HYMAN G. STEIN,

Petitioner, pro se.

FILED
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CHARLES ELMORE CROPLEY
CLERK

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.

OCTOBER TERM, 1940.

No. 573.

HYMAN G. STEIN, Petitioner,

vs.

ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, Debtor, HENRY W. KIEL, Trustee for ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, et al.

REPLY

Of Petitioner to Brief of Respondents, St. Louis Public Service Company and Henry W. Kiel, Trustee, St. Louis Public Service Company, Debtor, on Petition for Writ of Certiorari.

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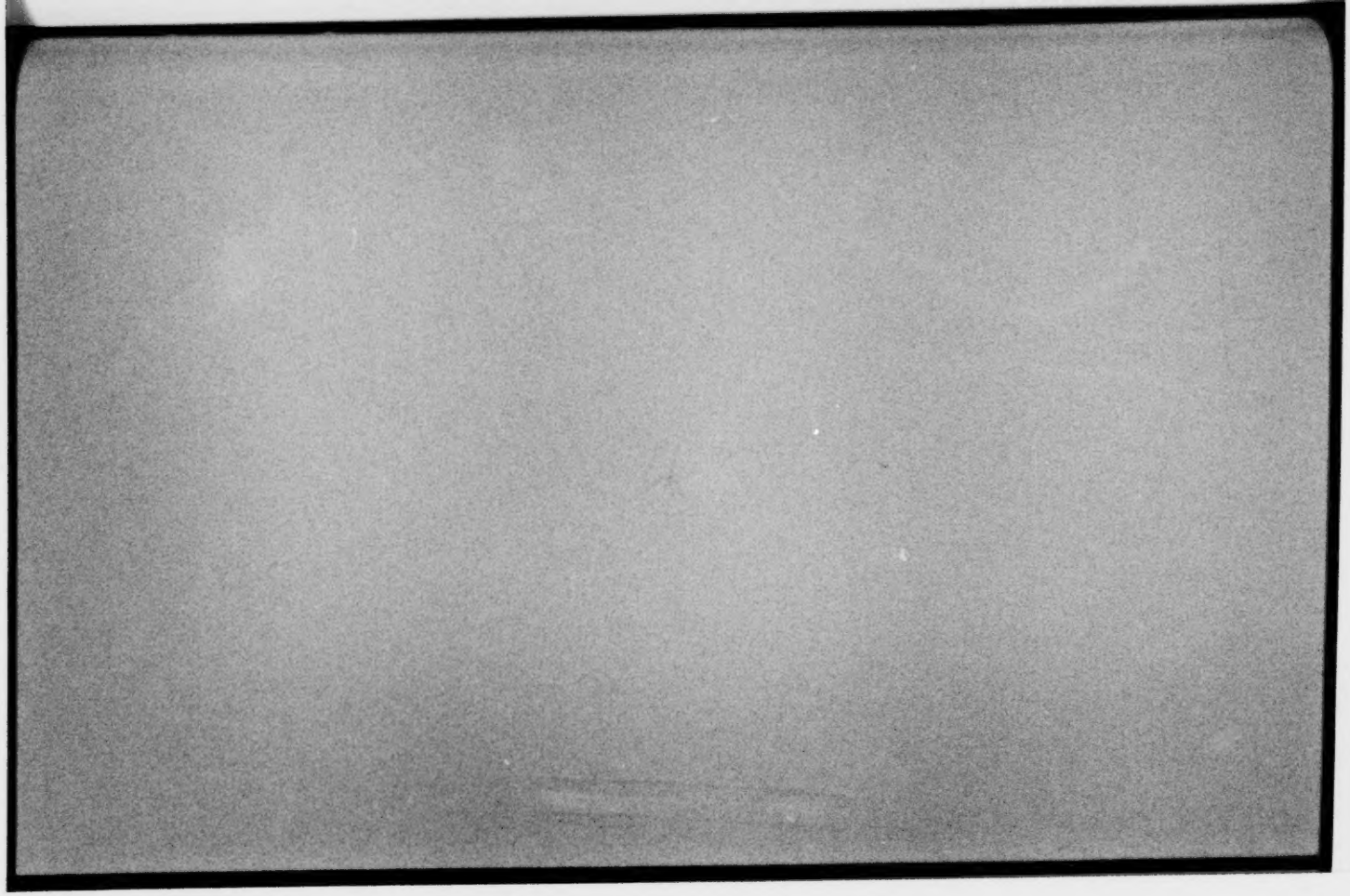

INDEX.

	Page
I. A reply to Point II (A-B) (pages 7-8, 13-18) of respondents' brief	1
II. A reply to Point IV (pages 10, 21-23) of respondents' brief	2
III. A reply to Point II (C-D) (pages 9, 18-19) of respondents' brief	4
IV. A correction of erroneous statements in Point III (pages 9, 20-21) of respondents' brief	6

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.

OCTOBER TERM, 1940.

No. 573.

HYMAN G. STEIN, Petitioner,

vs.

ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, Debtor, HENRY W. KIEL, Trustee for ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, et al.

REPLY

of Petitioner to Brief of Respondents, St. Louis Public Company and Henry W. Kiel, Trustee, St. Louis Public Service Company, Debtor,* on Petition for Writ of Certiorari.

I.

The utter fallacy of such an interpretation of Section II (2d) of the Plan, as that contended for by Respondents, is conclusively demonstrated when viewed in the light of a question to which, within all the realm of logic, there is and can be found no reasonable answer, namely:

> If "compensable" services of the tort creditors' Committee and counsel "in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings," were intended to be ascertained, measured and governed by those self-

*Said Respondents are for brevity hereinafter referred to as "Respondents."

same standards applicable to the services of all other committees and counsel in the proceedings—*why were the tort creditors singled out as the sole and only class for which the Plan contains an express provision that, as a part and "further payment" on account of their claims, the reorganized Debtor* "SHALL PAY" *the compensation and expenses of its Committee and counsel for their services in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings* (R. 25), *while as to all other committees and counsel there was made but that general provision in Section II (7) of the Plan* (R. 28-29) *that the Debtor shall pay such allowances as* "MAY" *be made or approved by the Court?*

II.

Mindful that a controversy respecting the adequacy of compensation allowed an attorney in a bankruptcy proceeding does not, in or of itself, present such a question as is within the applicable rule respecting the character of questions for the review of which this Honorable Court will grant certiorari, Petitioner did not assign as a reason for the allowance of the writ that even those of his services which the Court below **did** characterize and treat as "compensable" were not adequately compensated.*

The compensation of $15,000.00 allowed to Petitioner was allowed him, and treated, by the Courts below as being **solely** for services which were of benefit to the Debtor (R. 213-214), and such allowance was not contested or appealed by Debtor or its Trustee. Therefore, the contention, in Point IV of Respondents' brief, to the effect that said allowance was sufficient to cover all of Petitioner's services, including both those beneficial to the Debtor and those on behalf of the tort creditors, is an unwarranted effort now and indirectly to suggest that the allowance

*In the Court below Petitioner vigorously contended that the amount allowed him was wholly inadequate for even those of his services which, being beneficial to the Debtor, were treated by the Courts below as "compensable" (R. 193-194, 219-221).

made Petitioner **solely** for services beneficial to the Debtor exceeded the reasonable value of such services. It is quite obvious that, under the facts and circumstances, the amount allowed Petitioner **solely** for services which were beneficial to the Debtor is wholly immaterial to the question, here presented, of whether the refusal to allow Petitioner compensation for his services on behalf of the tort creditors contravened Section II (2d) of the Plan, and the rights of the tort creditors and Petitioner thereunder.

However, since Respondents, in their brief, undertake to minimize the value of Petitioner's services and to characterize as "feather stitching" certain designated portions thereof, as well as "most of the other things enumerated by Petitioner in his ninety-page petition (for compensation)," Petitioner deems it permissible to call attention to the uncontradicted fact that the services performed by the Petitioner, and now so slightingly referred to by the Debtor and its Trustee, included the institution and prosecution by Petitioner of the $10,000,000.00 bank loan litigation (R. 82-89), and that in the settlement of such litigation, respecting the claims filed by the banks **and which the Debtor's Trustee had previously recommended should be allowed as valid claims** (R. 81-82), the banks made concessions whereby the Debtor saved $2,222,144.01 (R. 23-24, 89-93, 156-158). If services which effected such a large saving to the Debtor constitute "feather stitching," then, certainly, the Debtor is in no position to minimize the value of "feather stitching"! Petitioner deems it further permissible to point out that it is undisputed that Petitioner's services, now so lightly viewed by Respondents, also resulted in the tort creditors receiving about $600,000.00 more than the original plans of reorganization allotted them (R. 62-65).

Furthermore, it is highly significant that, at the hearing in the District Court on Petitioner's application for com-

pensation, counsel for the Debtor and its Trustee informed the Court that this Petitioner had "worked hard * * *" and that Petitioner had "co-operated throughout this entire proceeding with the Trustee and his counsel in the administration of the property" (R. 173). Certainly, the present position of counsel for the Respondents is hardly consistent with his position at that hearing.

Respondents state at page 22 of their brief that the parties who had invested their money in the Debtor's enterprise received about 50 per cent of the amount of their claims. Such fact is in nowise pertinent here, and, in any event, does not require that this Petitioner should be made the "whipping-boy." Petitioner was allowed a sum equaling less than three-fourths of 1 per cent of the $2,222,-144.01 saved for the Debtor through settlement of the bank loan litigation, **which Petitioner had instituted and prosecuted after the Debtor's Trustee had recommended that the banks' claims be adjudged valid.** Further, the compensation allowed Petitioner is less than 3 per cent of the $600,000.00 which he recovered for the tort creditors over and above the aggregate amount allotted them under original plans of reorganization (R. 62-65).

III.

The Respondents contend that the order confirming the Plan was tantamount to a disapproval of the provisions of the Plan respecting the determination and payment of Petitioner's compensation. Such contention, in effect, charges the trial court with mischievously misleading the tort creditors in connection with what they would receive in settlement of their claims—for the trial court previously had specifically ordered the Debtor's Trustee to advise the tort creditors by a written notice (R. 41-43), and he did so advise the tort creditors (R. 47), that under the Plan they would receive certain specified sums in cash "and in

addition thereto, and as a further payment on account of said claims," the Debtor would pay in cash the reasonable compensation and expenses of Petitioner for his "services in, and in connection with the reorganization proceedings, the amount of such compensation and expenses to be determined by the Court." To charge, as Respondents in effect have charged, that, after receiving the acceptances of the tort creditors of these provisions, the trial court approved the Plan with a reservation which would effectively destroy such provisions, is to charge the trial court with an abuse of power and excess of jurisdiction which cannot be justified. That the trial court was without power or authority to materially alter the rights of the tort creditors, as provided in the Plan submitted to and accepted by them, without having first submitted the proposed alterations for the consideration and approval of the tort creditors, is too plain to require any argument. The trial court's reservation of jurisdiction to make any and all "allowances as may be proper," in its order confirming the Plan, obviously referred to committees and counsel in respect of whose compensation no similarly definite, specific and contractual provision was made in the Plan, and for whom there was only the general provision in Section II (7) of the Plan; and obviously meant such allowances as "may be proper" under the terms and provisions of the Plan. Would it be "proper" for the Court to have made an order contravening such provision (Section II [2d]) in the Plan, when such provision had theretofore been submitted by the Court to the tort creditors as the inducement for their acceptance of the Plan?

On page 15 of their brief Respondents state that, under Petitioner's interpretation of Section II (2d) of the Plan, the trial court would have had "the say-so about nothing connected with the allowance for such (Petitioner's) services except the fixation of the amount." Such statement is incorrect. The Court on May 16, 1939, approved the

Plan with said provision therein (R. 31) and advised the tort creditors of such approval (R. 41-43, 47). Thus, the trial court, by such approval, and, subsequently, on July 7, 1939, by its confirmation of the Plan, did consider, pass upon, ratify and approve said provision for the payment by the Debtor of Petitioner's compensation, as a further and additional payment on account of the tort claims, and by the terms of the Plan, the Court retained jurisdiction and authority to **thereafter determine the amount of such compensation.**

IV.

The statements on pages 9 and 20 of Respondents' brief, to the effect that Petitioner acted for the tort creditors' attorneys and not for the tort creditors themselves, is obviously the result of an inadvertent misconception by Respondents of the statements made in Petitioner's application for compensation respecting the circumstances under which the tort creditors' Committee was formed, and the **method** by which it **solicited** tort creditors to become parties to the agreement of July 16, 1934 (the agreement by which the Committee was constituted). As appears in said application, the Committee was formed (R. 58) at the request of law firms representing a large amount of tort claims, and, in the course of the reorganization proceeding, "2,037 Tort Creditors, holding claims aggregating $1,234,684.05, joined in and became parties to said agreement, dated July 16, 1934," and other tort creditors gave the Committee their respective authorizations to accept on their behalf any plan containing in substance the provisions made for tort creditors in Section II (2d) of the Plan (R. 58). **In soliciting** tort creditors to become parties to said agreement dated July 16, 1934, the Committee, until about October, 1938, conducted such solicitations of tort creditors **through their respective attorneys**, but subsequent to about October, 1938, the Committee, having ob-

tained leave of Court so to do, sent such solicitations **directly** to tort creditors (R. 10-12, 117).

It is apparent that Respondents have, also through inadvertence, misconceived the provisions of the agreement dated July 16, 1934, respecting the financial obligations imposed therein upon the tort creditors who became parties to said agreement. While Paragraph IX of said agreement (R. 187) **in no way involves** the question of **expenses**, and deals only with the matter of the **Committee's own compensation**, the Respondents, in Point III of their brief, set forth mathematical calculations respecting "the limit of the amount * * * that the committee could have called upon the tort creditors to contribute for the services and expenses of the committee and its counsel." The fact that said Paragraph IX in no way concerns itself with the subject of **expenses**, and the fact that paragraphs VI to VIII, inclusive, of the agreement deal with the matter of both the expenses of the Committee and the tort creditors' liability therefor (R. 187), obviously constitute full answer to the portion of Point III of Respondents' brief now under discussion.*

The contention in Point III of Respondents' brief, to the effect that Petitioner "had no right of action" against the tort creditors "nor lien upon their cause of action," is fully answered by the provisions in said agreement respecting Petitioner's employment by, and the tort creditors' obligation for the expenses incurred by, the committee. Paragraph V of the agreement expressly authorized and directed Petitioner's employment as counsel by the Committee (R. 187). Paragraphs VI-VIII expressly provided that the creditors becoming parties to said agreement should pay all expenses incurred by the Committee,

*That the Respondents have misinterpreted the provisions of said Paragraph IX (R. 187), even in respect of the Committee's own compenpensation (which provisions, are, however, immaterial here), is readily apparent upon mere casual examination of said paragraph.

and that their claims should be subject to a first lien in favor of the Committtee as security for the payment of such expenses. Obviously, the fees of counsel, so employed under the express provisions of said agreement, was an "expense" incurred by the Committee and the tort creditors. Such being the record facts, this Petitioner so obviously had and has an attorney's lien for his services, that it is not necessary for Petitioner to burden the Court with a consideration of the applicable laws of Missouri on that subject.

Respectfully submitted,

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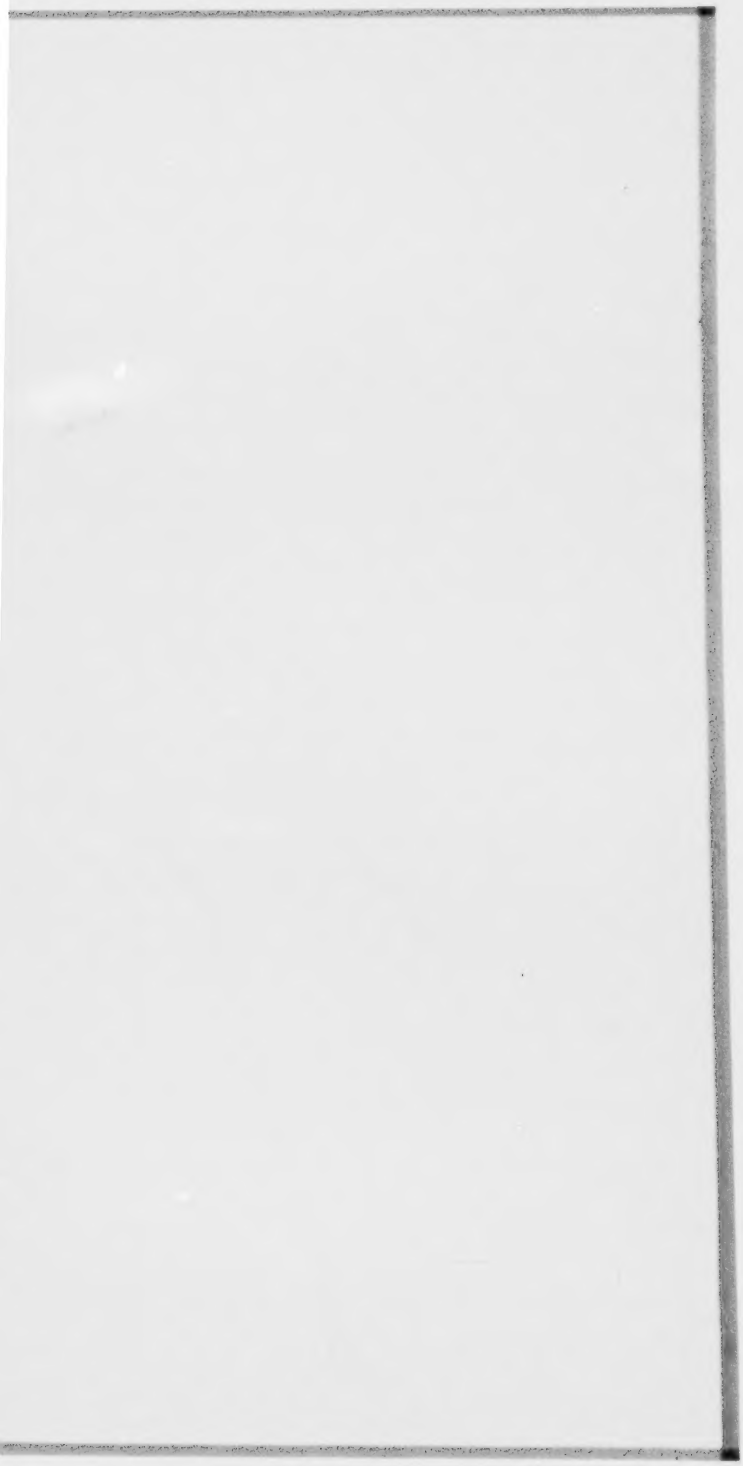

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SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.

OCTOBER TERM, 1940.

No. 573.

HYMAN G. STEIN, Petitioner,

vs.

ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, Debtor, HENRY W. KIEL, Trustee for ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, et al.

BRIEF OF RESPONDENTS

In Opposition to the Granting of Certiorari to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit.

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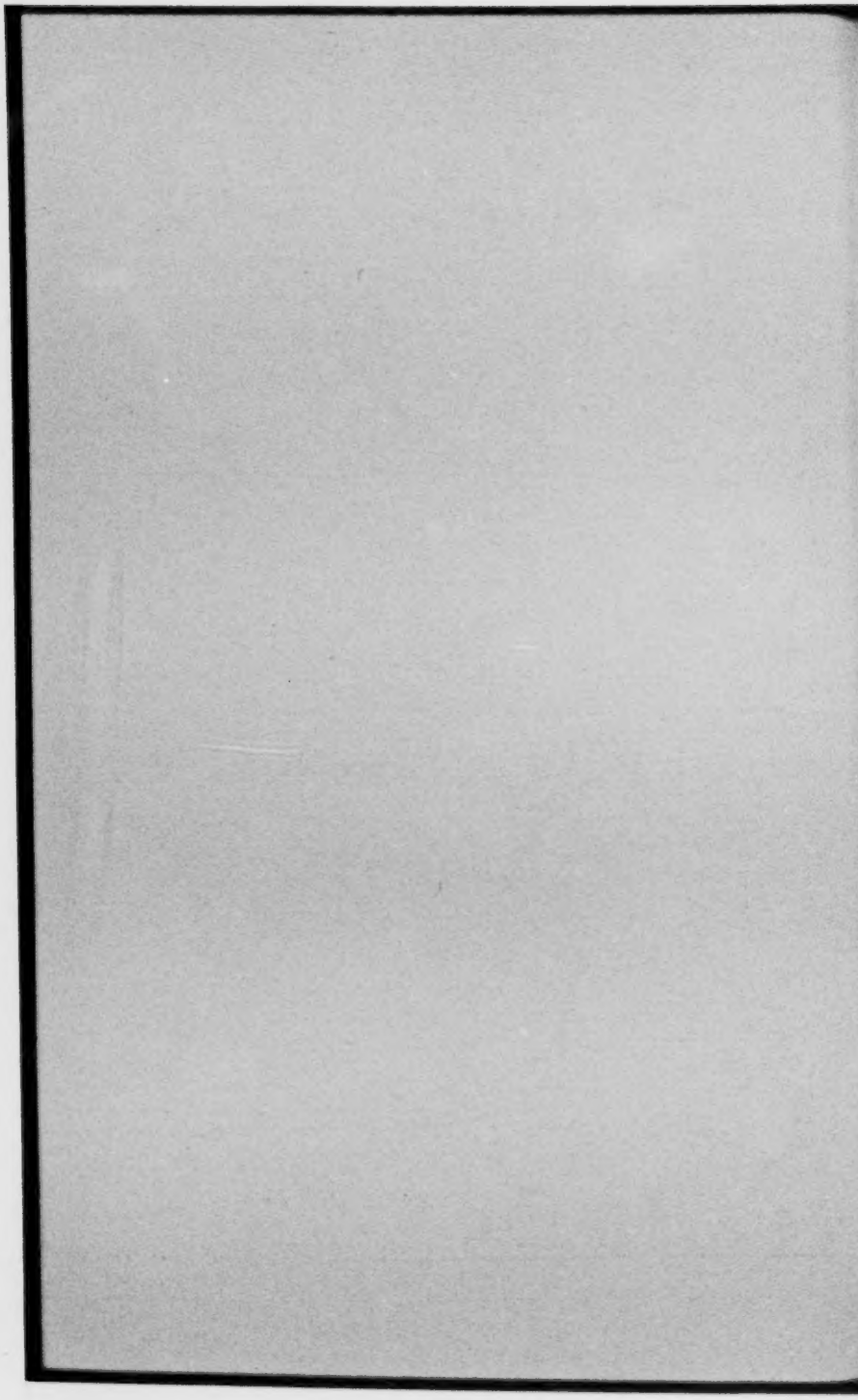

INDEX.

	Page
Statement	1
Question presented	1
Outline of the facts	2
Points and authorities	7
Argument	11
I. No ground for certiorari exists	11
A. No conflicting decision shown	12
B. No question of federal law involved	12
C. No conflict on question of local law	12
II. The decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals is correct on the merits	13
A. The paragraph of the reorganization plan (quoted on pp. 13-14) does not, correctly interpreted, provide for compensation for services which are not compensable under the law	14
B. The provision of the reorganization plan in question should be most strongly construed against petitioner because he prepared it and because, if it were given the interpretation he contends for, it would be in derogation of the law	16
C. The provisions of the decree confirming the reorganization plan conclusively demonstrate that this interpretation is correct	18
D. If the reorganization plan were susceptible of the interpretation given it by petitioner, the above-cited provision in the order of the Court would be tantamount to a disapproval of the plan insofar as it might authorize payment for services not compensable under the law	19

III. The decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals does not deprive the tort creditors of any of their rights 20

IV. In any view of the situation and regardless of whether the rights of petitioner were enlarged by the provisions of the reorganization plan, the amount awarded to him is fair and is all he is entitled to receive..... 21

Cases Cited.

Callaghan v. Reconstruction Finance Corporation, 297 U. S. 464, 468.....10, 22

City of Mount Vernon v. Mount Vernon Trust Company, 270 N. Y. 400, 1 N. E. 2nd, 825, 827.....9, 19

Dickinson Industrial Site, Inc., v. Cowan, ... U. S. ..., 84 L. ed. 549, l. c. 553.....3, 10, 22

E. I. DuPont DeNemours & Co. v. Claiborne-Reno Co., 64 Fed. 2nd, 224, 228.....8, 17

Greensfelder et al. v. St. Louis Public Service Company et al., 114 Fed. 2nd, 53, 59, 64.....3, 5, 7, 8, 13, 17

Gulf Refining Co. v. Home Indemnity Co., 78 Fed. 2nd, 842, 844 .....8, 17

In re A. Herz, Inc., 81 Fed. 2nd, 511, 513.....8, 14

In re Nine North Church Street, Inc., 89 Fed. 2nd, 13, 14 .....8, 15

Stipcich v. Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 277 U. S. 311, 322 .....8, 17

Straus v. Baker Co., 87 Fed. 2nd, 401, 407.....8, 14

Teasdale v. Sefton National Fibre Can Co., 85 Fed. 2nd, 379, 383.....8, 14

Wright v. City National Bank & Trust Co., 104 Fed. 2nd, 285, 288.....9, 19

Statutes Cited.

Bankruptcy Act, Sec. 77 B (c) (9), 11 U. S. C. A., Sec. 207 .....8, 15

Chandler Act, Sec. 243, 11 U. S. C. A., Sec. 643.....8, 12, 15

Supreme Court Rule 38, subdivision 5 (b).....7, 11, 13

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.

OCTOBER TERM, 1940.

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HYMAN G. STEIN, Petitioner,

vs.

ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, Debtor, HENRY W. KIEL, Trustee for ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY, et al.

BRIEF OF RESPONDENTS

In Opposition to the Granting of Certiorari to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit.

STATEMENT.

QUESTION PRESENTED.

The question presented on this petition is merely one of interpretation of the language of the plan of reorganization of a corporation under the provisions of section 77B of the Bankruptcy Act.

OUTLINE OF THE FACTS.

The specific provision of the reorganization plan involved here is as follows (R. 25):

> "Holders of tort claims will receive a sum in cash equal to 35% of the principal amount of their respective claims (without interest) and in addition thereto, and as a further payment on account of such claims the Reorganized Company shall pay in cash the reasonable compensation and expenses of The General Creditors' Committee formed under agreement dated as of July 16, 1934, and its counsel, for their services in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings, the amount of such compensation and expenses to be determined by the Court;"

The order of the District Court approving the reorganization plan provides, with reference to allowances for services in and in connection with the proceedings in court (R. 53):

> "The Court hereby reserves jurisdiction to make any and all allowances* **as may be proper** for the services and expenses of Protective Committees, the Reorganization Committee, Indenture Trustees, Debtor, officers of the Court for the management of the property of the Debtor, and counsel of all such persons, corporations or groups, whether the services were rendered in connection with formulating the Plan of Reorganization, in connection with any of the controversies which arose in this proceeding or in any prior corporate reorganization proceedings or in the prior equity receivership, or in representing such persons, corporations or groups in the reorganization proceedings, in any prior corporate reorganization proceedings or in the prior equity receivership. Debtor as reorganized shall pay in cash all such allowances that may be made by the Court in this proceeding or in the prior equity receivership suit."

*Emphasis is ours, wherever used, unless the contrary is stated.

Forty petitions for allowances, the demands of which aggregated $891,182.71, were filed in the District Court. (R. 232, 233.)

The summation of the allowances made by that Court is $299,534.24. (R. 233.)

Petitioner here asked for an allowance of $75,778.23. He was awarded $15,778.23. His protective committee and its secretary were given an additional $12,250.00. (R. 233.)

The respective demands and allowances are set out in the stipulation above adverted to.

The District Court, having in mind the rationale of section 77B with reference to allowances for services, as held by this Court in Dickinson Industrial Site, Inc., v. Cowan, ... U. S. ..., 84 L. ed. 549, l. c. 553, stated in its order, after making the several allowances (R. 184):

> "2. That the several allowances above made are entirely separate and independent of each other; but each individual allowance was taken into consideration by the Court in connection with the other allowances, to the end that the payment of the aggregate will not have the effect of wasting or offsetting the gratifying savings accomplished for Debtor by the Bankruptcy proceedings, but will be on a basis commensurate with those proceedings and within the ability of Debtor to pay."

Petitioner appealed from that order to the Circuit Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit.

In affirming the order, that Court, in an opinion by Judge Woodrough, held (R. 213; Greensfelder et al. v. St. Louis Public Service Company et al., 114 Fed. 2nd, 53, 64):

> "Hyman G. Stein represented the tort claimants in the reorganization proceedings and also appeared for the general creditors and for the City of St. Louis.

His principal services were rendered on behalf of the tort creditors who through his efforts received a substantially larger share of the estate than original plans of reorganization allotted to them.

If the trial court was justified in restricting Mr. Stein's allowance by relating it to the benefit of his services to the estate, the order should be sustained, but Mr. Stein contends that the special provision of the Reorganization Plan, Section II (2d), entitled him to have the full amount of a reasonable contingent fee allowed him. The provision is appended and we think the wording, like that of Section 7 heretofore discussed, is compatible with an intent to cover compensable services only and to leave the amount thereof to the sound discretion of the trial court. Mr. Stein's efforts were primarily for his clients and the amount allowed him was not disproportionate to the benefit to the estate."

Section 7 of the reorganization plan, to which reference is made in the above quotation, reads (R. 209):

"7. Expenses and Costs of Reorganization.

"The Reorganized Company shall pay in cash all costs and expenses of administration and other allowances which may be approved or made by the Court in these proceedings, including allowance for services and expenses of protective committees, the reorganization committee, indenture trustees, the Company, officers of the Court for the management of the property of the debtor and the counsel of all such persons, corporations or groups, whether the services were rendered in connection with formulating the Plan of Reorganization, were rendered in connection with any of the controversies which arose in the reorganization proceedings or the prior equity receivership proceedings or were rendered in representing such persons, corporations or groups in the reorganization proceedings, or the prior equity receivership. The Reorganized Company shall pay in cash all costs, expenses

and allowances which may have been incurred or may be made in the prior equity receivership."

Following is the Court's interpretation of it (R. 211; Greensfelder et al. v. St. Louis Public Service Company et al., 114 Fed. 2nd 53, 59):

"Section 7 of Plan. Section 7 of the approved Plan of Reorganization, above set forth, broadens the field of services compensable by the reorganized Company on the determination and order of the Court to the extent that both the receivership and the reorganization proceedings are included and that compensation is not to be denied because services to the estate might also be services to a client. To that extent the section was appropriate and was properly incorporated in the plan. The section recites that the 'Reorganized Company shall pay in cash all costs and expenses of administration and other allowances which may be approved by the Court in these proceedings', but the wording of the section does not justify an interpretation that the court must allow fees to attorneys or others which are not properly included under the law as costs and expenses of administration. Appellants would have the section construed as though it read that the reorganized company should be required to pay as costs and expenses of administration all fees chargeable for services to their clients. But we think costs and expenses of administration which the section declares the reorganized company shall pay are those which are allowable under the law and none other. Such costs and expenses of administration do not include fees for services rendered primarily in the interests of private clients. They include only the services rendered in advancement of the reorganization proceedings and for the benefit of the estate. * * * If there may be said to be any ambiguity in section 7, it should be construed in accord with the applicable law, see Marx v. United States, 8 Cir., 86 F. 2d 245, 248; Compaigne

General Atlantique v. American Tobacco Co., 2 Cir., 31 F. 2d 633, 666, and the ambiguities resolved against those who drafted it. See Northern Pac. Ry. Co. v. Twohy Bros., 9 Cir., 95 F. 2d 220, 223; E. I. Dupont de Nemours v. Claiborne-Reno Co., 8 Cir., 64 F. 2d 224, 228; Queen Insurance Co. v. Milling Co., 8 Cir., 43 F. 2d 885, 887-8; Sternberg v. Drainage District, 8 Cir., 44 F. 2d 560, 562. The trial court's action reflects that he approved the reorganization plan under the construction that he would retain jurisdiction for lawful and proper allowances only, and that he recognized therein no shifting of liability for fees or compensation from clients to the reorganized company. He restricted compensation to services which benefited the estate and such action was not erroneous.

POINTS AND AUTHORITIES.

I.

No ground for the issuance of a writ of certiorari is shown to exist.

Supreme Court Rule 38, subdivision 5 (b).

The petition attempts to show that the decision sought to be reviewed is (a) in conflict with decisions of this Court and other circuit courts of appeals, (b) determines an important question of federal law, and (c) is in conflict with the decisions of the Missouri courts on a question of local law.

(a) No conflicting decision **"on the same matter"** or on a similar one, or, indeed, in any respect, is cited.

(b) The decision does not determine a question of federal law.

(c) The decision is not in conflict with the decisions of the Missouri courts; in fact, it merely interprets a contractual provision and no question of local law was decided or is involved. (See Greensfelder et al. v. St. Louis Public Service Company et al., 114 Fed. 2nd, 53, 64.)

II.

On the merits, the decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals is correct.

(a) Subdivision (d), paragraph 2, part II of the reorganization plan does not, as contended for by petitioner, enlarge his rights to compensation over and beyond those vouchsafed to him by law.

That paragraph does not, correctly interpreted, provide for compensation for services which, under the cases below

cited, the Chandler Act and Section 77 B of the Bankruptcy Act, are not compensable.

Teasdale v. Sefton National Fibre Can Co., 85 Fed. 2nd, 379, 383;
In re A. Herz, Inc., 81 Fed. 2nd, 511, 513;
Straus v. Baker Co., 87 Fed. 2nd, 401, 407;
Section 243, Chandler Act, 11 U. S. C. A., sec. 643;
Section 77 B (c) (9), 11 U. S. C. A., section 207.

It provides for compensation for services "in and in connection with the reorganization proceedings"—that is, for services which contributed toward the effectuation of the reorganization or were beneficial to Debtor in the administration of its estate.

In re Nine North Church Street, Inc., 89 Fed. 2nd, 13, 14.

It does not provide for remuneration for services which were primarily for the benefit of the tort creditors.

(b) The provision, as interpreted by petitioner, would be in derogation of the rules of law applicable to the allowance of compensation in reorganization proceedings, and hence, in determining whether it is susceptible of that construction, the rule *strictissimi juris* should be applied.

Moreover, it was incorporated in the reorganization plan at the behest and upon the insistence of petitioner and, therefore, it should be most strongly construed against him.

Stipcich v. Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 277 U. S. 311, 322;
Gulf Refining Co. v. Home Indemnity Co., 78 Fed. 2nd, 842, 844;
E. I. DuPont DeNemours & Co. v. Claiborne-Reno Co., 64 Fed. 2nd, 224, 228;
Also see cases cited in Greensfelder et al. v. St. Louis Public Service Company, 114 Fed. 2nd, 53, l. c. 60.

(c) The provisions of the order confirming the reorganization plan conclusively demonstrate that the interpretation of the Circuit Court of Appeals is correct, since it provides that jurisdiction is reserved to make such allowances **"as may be proper."**

See paragraph 24 of Order No. 245. (R. 53.)

The word "proper", as used, is the synonym of "legal" or "authorized by law."

City of Mount Vernon v. Mount Vernon Trust Company, 270 N. Y. 400, 1 N. E. 2nd, 825, 827.

(d) If the reorganization plan were susceptible of the interpretation given it by petitioner, the above-cited provisions in the court order would be tantamount to a disapproval of it insofar as it might, if it undertook to do so, authorize payment for services not compensable under the law.

Wright v. City National Bank & Trust Co., 104 Fed. 2nd, 285, 288.

III.

Petitioner's complaint, that the decision deprives the tort creditors of certain rights, is not well taken.

Petitioner did not represent the tort claimants themselves; he represented their attorneys. He had no right of action against them nor lien upon their cause of action.

Moreover, the liability of the tort creditors to the protective committee and its counsel for compensation for their services and expenses was limited to $10,803.48 by the provisions of the committee agreement.

The committee, its secretary and its counsel were allowed $28,028.23.

IV.

In any view of the situation and regardless
the rights of petitioner were enlarged by the
of the reorganization plan, the amount award
fair and is all he is entitled to receive.

Callaghan v. Reconstruction Finance C
297 U. S. 464, 468;
Dickinson Industrial Site v. Cowan, ...
84 L. ed. 549, 553.

ARGUMENT.

I.

NO GROUND FOR CERTIORARI EXISTS.

No ground, under rule 38, subdivision 5 (b) of this Court, for the issuance of a writ of certiorari is set out in the petition, since the decision sought to be reviewed is not shown to be in conflict with the decision of another circuit court of appeals **on the same matter**, is not shown to be a decision of an important question of local law in a way probably in conflict with applicable local decisions, is not shown to be a decision of an important question of federal law which has not been, but should be, settled by this Court, is not shown to be a decision of a federal question in a way probably in conflict with applicable decisions of this Court, and is not shown to have so far departed from the accepted and usual course of judicial proceedings, or so far sanctioned such a departure by the lower court, as to call for an exercise of this Court's power of supervision.

The petition merely assigns, as grounds for the exercise of the extraordinary jurisdiction of this Court sought, (a) that the Circuit Court of Appeals misinterpreted the language of the provisions of the reorganization plan in question and in so doing rendered a decision which is in conflict with decisions of this Court and other circuit courts of appeals (points I and II), (b) that it decided an important question of "federal law which has not been * * * but should be settled by this Court" (point II), and (c) that its decision is in conflict with certain decisions of the Missouri courts on a question of local law (point III).

A.

No conflicting decision shown.

No decision of this Court or of another circuit court of appeals is cited in the petition or the supporting brief which is in conflict with the decision in this case.

The alleged conflicting decisions cited merely lay down the rules universally followed in construing contracts; they are not decisions **"on the same matter"** or on even a similar one.

And they are not in conflict with the decision at bar on the abstract rule they announce.

B.

No question of federal law involved.

The section of the Chandler Act, cited on pages 31 and 32 of petitioner's brief, is, of course, not applicable, since it merely provides that payments for services made or promised by a debtor shall be fully disclosed to the judge and be reasonable, or, if to be fixed after confirmation of the plan, will be subject to the approval of the judge.

This statute has nothing to do with the interpretation of the provision in the reorganization plan relied upon by petitioner and has no relevancy to the question presented here and hence its construction could not in any way be involved.

The decision sought to be reviewed does not apply, construe or advert to this statute and, therefore, it does not determine a question of federal law.

C.

No conflict on question of local law.

The decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals is not in conflict with the decisions of the Missouri courts cited,

for the reason that it does not determine that it is improper or illegal to allocate payments as between attorney and client nor pass upon the Missouri law in any way, but merely, **in construing the language of the reorganization plan,** holds that it was intended "to cover compensable services only and to leave the amount thereof to the sound discretion of the trial court."

Greensfelder et al. v. St. Louis Public Service Co., 114 Fed. 2nd 53, l. c. 64 (R. 213).

We, therefore, respectfully submit that no "special or important reason" for review by this Court is presented by petitioner or, in fact, exists.

Supreme Court Rule 38, subdivision 5.

The question involved, and determined by the Circuit Court of Appeals, is a simple one—**What does the provision of the reorganization plan mean?**

If certiorari were issued in this case, it would be equally appropriate in every case decided by the circuit courts of appeals.

II.

THE DECISION OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS IS CORRECT ON THE MERITS.

The provision here in question is subdivision (d), paragraph 2, part II and is as follows (R. 25):

"(d) **Tort Claimants.**

"Holders of tort claims will receive a sum in cash equal to 35% of the principal amount of their respective claims (without interest) and in addition thereto, and as a further payment on account of such claims the Reorganized Company shall pay in cash the reasonable compensation and expenses of The General Creditors' Committee formed under agreement dated

as of July 16, 1934, and its counsel, **for their services in, and in connection with, the reorganization proceedings**, the amount of such compensation and expenses to be determined by the Court."

A.

The above-quoted paragraph of the reorganization plan does not, correctly interpreted, provide for compensation for services which are not compensable under the law.

It provides for compensation for services "in and in connection with the reorganization proceedings"—that is, for services which contributed toward the effectuation of the reorganization or were beneficial to Debtor in the administration of its estate.

It does not provide for remuneration for services which were primarily for the benefit of the tort creditors.

Petitioner does not contend that his services for the tort creditors were primarily in the interest or for the benefit of Debtor; but he says that Debtor received incidental benefit therefrom.

He testified (R. 180):

> "Primarily, naturally I was representing the General Creditors' Committee which was acting for the tort creditors. **As an incident to my services** and as set forth in the pleadings stating there was a class proceeding, **the debtor certainly benefited.**"

Under the law, services performed by a lawyer for the benefit of his client "in or in connection with" a reorganization proceeding are not properly chargeable against the debtor.

Teasdale v. Sefton National Fibre Can Co., 85 Fed. 2nd, 379, 383;
In re A. Herz, Inc., 81 Fed. 2nd, 511, 513;
Straus v. Baker Co., 87 Fed. 2nd, 401, 407.

Section 243 of the Chandler Act, 11 U. S. C. A., section 643, provides that—

> "In fixing any such allowances [to creditors and their attorneys], the judge shall give consideration only to the services which contributed to the plan confirmed or to the refusal of confirmation of a plan, or which were beneficial in the administration of the estate, and to the proper costs and expenses incidental thereto."

Also, please see section 77B (c) (9), 11 U. S. C. A. section 207.

Petitioner, in order to escape from the effect of these cases and statutes, contends that the provision of the reorganization plan above quoted made it obligatory upon the District Court to allow him compensation for everything he did primarily in the interest and for the benefit of tort creditors, for any and every conceivable character of service he may have performed in any way connected with the reorganization proceedings, no matter how remote or contingent, and regardless of whether the services were inimical to the interests of Debtor—that Court to have the say-so about nothing connected with the allowance for such services except the fixation of the amount.

We maintain that the phrase, "for their services in and in connection with the reorganization proceedings," means and can only mean services in connection with some reorganization step or administrative action beneficial to Debtor.

In construing the phrase "in connection with the proceeding" in section 77B of the Bankruptcy Act, with reference to allowances for services of attorneys and others, the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, in In re Nine North Church Street, Inc., 89 Fed. 2nd, 13, 14, held:

"Compensation can only be allowed 'in connection with the proceeding and the plan.' The words 'in connection with the proceeding,' if taken alone, might cover any services in the course of the 77B proceeding. We think, however, that they should be limited to such necessary services as are steps in a reorganization, not merely proposed or temporarily adopted through error, but finally effected."

B.

The provision of the reorganization plan in question should be most strongly construed against petitioner because he prepared it and because, if it were given the interpretation he contends for, it would be in derogation of the law.

This provision was incorporated in the plan at the request of petitioner and upon his insistence. (See the following paragraphs of petitioner's application for allowance: 24, R. 74; 65, R. 113; 66, R. 115; exhibit C, R. 138).

If it was the intent to cover services for a private client or group, services of a character not recognized by the law as compensable, the provision should have been phrased to read:

"For all their services in behalf of the tort claimants and for any other service in and in connection with the reorganization proceedings, whether or not, under the law, compensation would be allowable therefor."

In other words, if it be permissible to short-circuit the law, the language providing for the accomplishment of that purpose should be so plain and unambiguous that there could be no possible misunderstanding about it—so that "he who runs may read."

In this connection, we call attention to the holding in

Gulf Refining Co. v. Home Indemnity Co., 78 Fed. 2nd, 842, 844:

> "It is an old rule of contract construction that language must, if ambiguous, be construed against him who uses it because **it is a natural inference that the user would make plain what is in his favor.**"

And in E. I. Du Pont De Nemours & Co. v. Claiborne-Reno Co., 64 Fed. 2nd, 224, 228, it is said:

> "The language of a contract will be construed most strongly against the party preparing it."

Please see, also

Stipcich v. Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 277 U. S. 311, 322;

Other cases cited in Greensfelder et al. v. St. Louis Public Service Co., 114 Fed. 2nd, 53, 60.

The provision, as construed by petitioner is in derogation of the rules of law applicable to the allowance of compensation in such cases, as shown by the citations under the preceding subdivision, which is another reason for applying the *strictissimi juris* rule in construing it.

The District Court and the other creditors and stockholders might not have approved a plan containing a provision in the language we have above outlined, or similar words, "making plain what was in petitioner's favor," probably would not have; so that the effect of giving to the clause in question the interpretation contended for by petitioner would be to allow a cleverly concealed pit-fall to stand.

How could the District Judge, when he approved the reorganization plan, have construed this provision otherwise than as being in consonance with, not in derogation of, the law?

Keeping in mind the beneficent purpose of Congress in enacting the law giving financially distressed corporations a chance to rehabilitate themselves, as stated by this Court in the Dickinson Industrial Site case, supra (84 L. ed., 549, 553), and the mischief which would result from allowing a loophole for smart lawyers to continue to exploit such helpless entities, the courts should apply the rule *strictissimi juris* to a provision of the character under consideration.

C.

The provisions of the decree confirming the reorganization plan conclusively demonstrate that this interpretation is correct.

Paragraph 24 of the confirmatory decree reads (R. 53):

> "The Court hereby reserves jurisdiction to make any and all allowances **as may be proper** for the services and expenses of Protective Committees, the Reorganization Committee, Indenture Trustees, Debtor, officers of the Court for the management of the property of the Debtor, and counsel of all such persons, corporations or groups, whether the services were rendered in connection with formulating the Plan of Reorganization, in connection with any of the controversies which arose in this proceeding or in any prior corporate reorganization proceedings or in the prior equity receivership, or in representing such persons, corporations or groups in the reorganization proceedings, in any prior corporate reorganization proceedings or in the prior equity receivership. Debtor as reorganized shall pay in cash all such allowances that may be made by the Court in this proceeding or in the prior equity receivership suit."

Please note the language, "The Court hereby reserves jurisdiction to make any and all allowances **as may be**

proper," and "Debtor * * * shall pay * * * all **such** allowances as may be made by the Court."

The word "proper," as here employed, is the synonym of "legal" or "authorized by law."

> City of Mount Vernon v. Mount Vernon Trust Co., 270 N. Y. 400, 1 N. E. 2nd, 825, 827.

Would it be "proper" to allow fees contrary to the rules of decision laid down by the courts in construing the Bankruptcy Law and violative of that law itself?

Would it be "proper" for the Court to renounce its power and ignore its duty to disallow claims which were not compensable under those decisions and the statutes, on the theory that it was bound by the *ipse dixit* of the parties and had the right merely to fix the amount of compensation to be awarded?

D.

If the reorganization plan were susceptible of the interpretation given it by petitioner, the above-cited provision in the order of the Court would be tantamount to a disapproval of the plan insofar as it might authorize payment for services not compensable under the law.

In passing upon a somewhat similar situation, the Court, in Wright v. City National Bank & Trust Company, 104 Fed. 2nd. 285, 288, said:

> "The lower court, in its order approving the plan of reorganization, expressly provided that all disbursements by the trustee should be made as the court directed, which was tantamount to a disapproval of the plan insofar as it conferred on the reorganization committee, the authority to fix the compensation of the committee or its attorneys or other disbursements of the trustee."

III.

THE DECISION OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS DOES NOT DEPRIVE THE TORT CREDITORS OF ANY OF THEIR RIGHTS.

Petitioner's complaint (petitioner's brief, p. 28), that the construction placed by the decision sought to be reviewed upon the provision in the reorganization plan which he invokes deprives the tort creditors of certain rights, is not well taken.

Petitioner did not represent the tort claimants themselves; he represented their attorneys. He had no right of action against them nor lien upon their cause of action.

His application for allowance shows that the agreement between his committee and the reorganization committee was consummated in October, 1938. (Paragraph 66, R. 115.)

It then alleges that, prior to that time, "the committee had been acting at the instance of a number of attorneys representing the holders of a large amount of tort claims and the powers of attorney received from tort creditors had been solicited by the committee only through the attorneys representing such creditors." (Paragraph 67, R. 117.)

Paragraph IX of the protective committee agreement (R. 187) limits the amount of compensation to the committee [including its counsel] to be paid, at its option, by tort claimants who became parties to the agreement, to 2½% of the amount paid to them on their claims.

Tort claimants holding claims aggregating $1,234,684.05 became parties to the agreement. (R. 58.)

They were paid 35% of their claims under the provisions of the reorganization plan. (R. 25.)

They received $432,139 (35% of $1,234,684.05); 2½% of that amount is $10,803.48.

$10,803.48 is, therefore, the limit of the amount in the aggregate that the committee could have called upon the tort creditors to contribute for compensation for the services and expenses of the committee and its counsel.

The committee, its secretary, and petitioner as its counsel were allowed $28,028.23 for their services and expenses. (R. 233.)

IV.

IN ANY VIEW OF THE SITUATION AND REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE RIGHTS OF PETITIONER WERE ENLARGED BY THE PROVISIONS OF THE REORGANIZATION PLAN, THE AMOUNT AWARDED TO HIM IS FAIR AND IS ALL HE IS ENTITLED TO RECEIVE.

Petitioner states in paragraph 5 of his application for allowance, that he devoted at least 3,200 hours to the work for which he asks compensation. (R. 60.)

It discloses (see paragraph 64, R. 105-118 for example) that a large number of these "hours" were spent in examining petitions, orders and reports connected with the administration of the estate and prepared by somebody else. It was all right, of course, for petitioner to do feather-stitching of that kind; but there is no reason, in law or justice, for asking Debtor to pay for it. So far as Debtor is concerned, the duty to look after those matters devolved upon the officers of the Court, and Debtor paid for those services.

The same observations apply to most of the other things enumerated by petitioner in his ninety-page petition.

We venture to suggest that the 3,200 hours could be halved and halved again, and, even then, petitioner would be given more than generous credit for the number of legitimate, compensable hours he devoted to this work.

However, even if petitioner devoted 3,200 compensable hours to the work, he was awarded ample compensation therefor.

3,200 hours would constitute 400 8-hour working days. The compensation awarded ($15,000) would be at the rate of $37.50 for each of such days.

The parties who had their money invested in this enterprise received about 50% of the amount of their claims (the exact ratio is 50.68%). The claims of all kinds aggregated $62,339,949.09 and the total amount received by the claimants (treating new securities at par) was $31,594,021.06. (R. 20-27.)

Under these circumstances, "the wind should be tempered to the shorn lamb."

In Callaghan v. Reconstruction Finance Corporation, 297 U. S. 464, 468, this Court said:

> "It has been the consistent policy of Congress that proceedings in Bankruptcy and under section 77B be economically administered."

And (l. c. 469):

> "One of the controlling reasons for the enactment of section 77B was the desire to reduce the costs of reorganization."

Dickinson Industrial Site, Inc., v. Cowan, ... U. S. ..., 34 L. ed. 549, 553, holds:

> "The history of fees in corporate reorganizations contains many sordid chapters. One of the purposes of Sec. 77B was to place those fees under more effective control."

In the light of the policy of Congress and the decisions of the courts with respect to the limitation of allowances in reorganization bankruptcy proceedings, in the interest of economy of administration, and in view of the fact that the investors in this case were given distributive recognition on the basis of fifty-cent dollars, $15,000 was a liberal allowance to petitioner for the work he did—even on the inflated basis of 3,200 hours.

Respectfully we submit this brief and pray that the application for a writ of certiorari be denied.

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